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THE GOALS OF INTEGRATION.

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THE LACK OF CLEARLY DEFINED GOALS WITHIN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IS IMPEDING ITS TACTICS AND MOMENTUM. THE STATED GOAL OF INTEGRATION ACTUALLY HAS TWO ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS--FULL LEGAL EQUALITY AND RACIAL BALANCE. THE NEWER STRESS ON RACIAL BALANCE RESTS ON THE FALLACIOUS ASSUMPTIONS THAT THE NEGRO'S SITUATION IS UNIQUE BECAUSE OF SLAVERY AND COLOR, AND THAT ONLY MASSIVE GOVERNMENTAL ACTION CAN COUNTERACT THE DEEPLY INGRAINED AMERICAN RACISM. ACTUALLY, THE NEGRO'S CURRENT DISADVANTAGE IS A RESULT OF THE PROBLEMS OF URBANIZATION AND ACCULTURATION WHICH THE NEGRO SHARES WITH OTHER IMMIGRANTS, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF COLOR DEPENDS UPON THE SOCIAL ASSESSMENT OF IT, WHICH VARIES WITH THE TIMES. SOUTHERN INEQUALITY MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AS A PATHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT TO THE SOCIAL DYSFUNCTION FOLLOWING ABOLITION, WHEREAS NORTHERN INEQUALITY DERIVES FROM INFORMAL ASSOCIATIONS OF GROUPS ACCORDING TO KINSHIP OR COMMUNITY. INTEGRATION AS AN "ELIMINATION OF DISTINCTIVENESS" IS IRRELEVANT TO THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PLIGHT OF NEGROES, MOST OF WHOM ARE CONCERNED WITH DESEGREGATED EQUALITY, NOT WITH INTEGRATION. SEPARATENESS SHOULD NOT BE OBLITERATED, BECAUSE DOING SO WOULD DESTROY THE VERY NEGRO INSTITUTIONS WHICH THROUGH A FOCUS ON GROUP INTERESTS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP CAN HELP THE RACE TOWARD SOLUTIONS OF THEIR PROBLEMS. (NH)

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OSCAR HANDLIN

The Goals of Integration

SINCE 1954, and even more so since 1960, Americans concerned with resolving the dilemma posed by the Negro's plight in a society committed to equal rights have lived in a state of crisis. The destruction of the concept of "separate but equal" in the Brown Case was the culmination of a quarter-century of re-examination of the premise that the colored men of the United States could be held permanently in a position that was actually separate but unequal. The implications of that decision were not immediately clear; nor have they been clarified in the intervening eleven years.[1]

Had the decision been immediately acceded to, it might have been possible to begin at once to explore its consequences. Instead, the necessity for fighting a succession of guerrilla actions behind the lines has delayed any consideration of long-range problems. Attention has been so narrowly focused on tactical issues that there has been no time to consider ultimate goals. The civil rights movement, which is actually a congeries of quite disparate efforts, maintains the pretense of unity only by a resolute determination not to think of long-term objectives.

However, we know all too well, from an earlier conflict a century ago, that battles and even wars can be won and yet the fruits of victory lost through men's haziness about what they are fighting for. In the present situation, the inability to define the ultimate goals of the civil rights struggle is an unacknowledged threat that complicates immediate tactics and that may deprive this momentous upheaval of its meaning.

In the absence of defined goals, it is difficult to estimate the character or pace of change or even to judge its direction. Under these circumstances, organizational controls and leadership weaken. There is confusion about which objectives are salient, and issues tend to crop up of their own accord. Action is sporadic, local, and

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discontinuous and is not related to any general standard of importance. Explosive activists, always ready to precipitate conflict, find tactical opportunities to determine the questions to be fought over while the established leadership has to tag along to maintain its influence. At the same time, the atmosphere of continuous crisis generates the obligation of solidarity. Those who dissent must be silent or be counted as sympathizers of the antagonists. No one wishes to be known as an Uncle Tom or a white liberal.[2]

Recent demonstrations of solidarity on behalf of civil rights have been impressive. The march on Washington in 1963 and from Selma in 1965 showed the extent to which diverse elements in American society coalesced in support of a common cause. These occasions have ceremonial significance; they manifest the extent to which a variety of people affirm their dislike of brutality and their faith in the orderly methods of democracy. There is no difficulty in eliciting unanimity of support for the slogan of equal rights as man and citizen as long as the terms remain vague and undefined.

But it is erroneous to regard these events or professions of sentiment as expressions of unity with reference to a program of action. The calls for brotherly love sounded on the platforms do not reduce the intensity of the hatreds in Harlem. White resentment at black demands is also stiffening. It is a mistake to judge the extent of backlash by the refusal to commit suicide in 1964; the California vote on Proposition Fourteen that year was more revealing than the national vote against Goldwater. Popular sentiment is still for tolerance and against prejudice; but the time is approaching for a test of the meaning of that preference.[3]

Insofar as the civil rights movement has proceeded beyond the call for brotherly love or for equality, it has ventured upon unsure ground. Civil rights demands in Alabama and Mississippi are comprehensible; the promises of personal security, the ballot, and decent schools are familiar and long overdue. But the issues blur in the newer context of New York or Chicago or Atlanta where these minimal gains are well on the way to attainment. There the failure to define appropriate goals has created future difficulties, the shape of which is already apparent. The new problems are important not only because an increasing percentage of American Negroes live in an urban environment, but also because the range of decisions involved will confront the nation long after the difficulties of the rural South are resolved.

In the earlier stages of the struggle for equality, it was enough to ask that the government be color-blind. The barriers that confined the Negro were the products of law, and it was necessary to demand only the equal treatment that the Constitution guaranteed. Desegregation was the response to segregation; and it was a response that attracted the support not only of other underprivileged minorities but also of many Americans who found it in accord with their own creed of individual dignity and equality of opportunity.

In the past decade, emphasis has gradually and imperceptibly shifted from desegregation to integration, but without adequate awareness of the consequences and often with a profound ambiguity about the nature of the desirable goal.

The term integration sometimes refers to the openness of society, to a condition in which every individual can make the maximum number of voluntary contacts with others without regard to qualifications of ancestry. In that sense, the objective is a leveling of all barriers to association other than those based on ability, taste, and personal preference.

But integration sometimes also refers to a condition in which individuals of each racial or ethnic group are randomly distributed through the society so that every realm of activity contains a representative cross section of the population. In that sense, the object is the attainment, in every occupational, educational, and residential distribution, of a balance among the constituent elements in the society.

In crucial matters of public policy, antithetical consequences follow from the two positions. The one calls for improvements in the Negroes' opportunities for jobs, housing, and schooling even though the group may remain as separate as before; the other puts a primary emphasis upon racial balance.

The civil rights movement has never made a clear choice between these alternatives, nor has any spokesman fully articulated the implications of the two points of view. But increasingly in the past five years, the thrust has been in the latter direction, toward an organization in which every sector of society is racially balanced; and it is in that sense that the term integration will be used in the discussion which follows.

In part the change of recent years was due to the very intensity of the struggle against an intransigent opposition. More important, however, was the perception that the leveling of governmental bar-

riers was in itself inadequate to remove the handicaps under which colored people labored. The vicious cycle of slum housing, poor schools, lack of skills, and low income trapped the urban Negro and widened rather than closed the gap between him and others in the society. Deprivation became a pattern of life that hopelessly handicapped him in the competition for desirable places. The simple neutrality of government would not relieve him of these shackles; positive action to compensate was essential. The state was to intervene to assure the disadvantaged a due proportion of well-paying jobs and to balance the population of neighborhoods and schools in a thoroughly integrated pattern. That assurance was deemed necessary to restore equality to the disadvantaged. Hence the campaigns to destroy *de facto* segregation in the public schools, to secure preferential hiring and job quotas for Negroes in industry, and to manage housing in the interest of mixed residential neighborhoods.

This profound shift in the tactics of the civil rights movement during the past decade has come without any clear estimation of the consequences. To clarify those consequences, it is necessary to resolve the ambiguities in the goals of the civil rights movement. Is the ultimate objective to eliminate the differences that actually divide the population of the United States and thus dissolve its people into a single homogeneous and undifferentiated mass? Or will it be possible to reach toward equality while retaining the social subgroupings produced by a heritage of diversity and by the problems of managing a free population of almost 200 million? The answer, upon which the welfare of all Americans rests, should, to a greater degree than in the past, influence the tactics of the civil rights struggle.

The view of integration as racial balance rests on two fallacious assumptions—that the position of the Negro is absolutely unique in the American experience and that racist prejudice is so thoroughly ingrained in the people of the United States that only positive exertions by the government will assure the colored man his rights. Neither proposition conforms to the evidence.

The Negro is unique, it is argued, because his color sets him off from the majority more decisively than the traits of other ethnic groups did and because slavery crippled him so seriously that he cannot compete on equal terms and needs a crutch to help him along.

Certainly slavery was a more traumatic experience than the centuries of persecution, the hardships of migration, and the generations of depressed proletarian existence from which the Irish peasants suffered. But the argument slights the Negro's powers of recuperation and exaggerates the extent to which the damage caused more than a century ago remains a permanent part of his character. There has been a tendency to underestimate the extent of his achievements even in the fifty years immediately after emancipation, under conditions immensely more difficult than those of the present. When one considers the backwardness of the Southern economy after 1865, the exclusion from political power, the racist prejudices, and the bitterness left by a great war, it was a respectable accomplishment to have formed stable family units, to have developed productive skills, and to have created an array of churches, lodges, and media for cultural expression, with the limited resources the group possessed. Few people released from bondage in any society have performed as creditably.[4]

The disadvantages from which the Negro suffers in 1965 are less the products of the plantation than of the great migration to the city in the past fifty years; and that experience he shares with the other ethnic groups who have participated in American urbanization. Of course the Negroes are different from the Poles or Italians or Jews, just as those peoples differ among, and from, each other. The differences, however, are not of kind but of degree, and they are largely explained by the recency of arrival of the colored men, by their greater numbers, and by their dense concentration in a few cities. The problems of prejudice and acculturation from which the most recent newcomers suffer had their counterparts among the earlier arrivals.[5]

Nor is color the sole and unique sign of ethnic visibility. It is no doubt the most prominent mode of social recognition; but much depends upon the social assessment of this as of other physical traits. The Japanese-Americans are far less visible in 1965 than they were in 1940 although their color has not changed. And the Kennedys are still identified as Irish after five generations in the New World, and despite their wealth, prominence, and whiteness.

The assumption that color has a unique differentiating quality rests upon the argument that American society is inherently racist, its promise of equality reserved only for the white man. It has become fashionable in the past few years to sneer at Myrdal's statement of the American creed of equality and to urge that only

forceful measures will restrain the propensity to prejudice.

There was a racist period in American history in the sixty years after the end of the Civil War; but the hatreds of that period were peculiar to the time and place. Much more significant is the deeper tradition of equality before and since that interlude. The agony with which slaveholders like Thomas Jefferson and George Mason considered their own situation, the tortured efforts of early scientists to understand color differences, and the torment the abolitionists caused in the North and the South were the results of the inability to square the existing labor system with the belief in the brotherhood of man and the commitment to equality. And the changes since 1945 have been the result not of fear either of the Negroes or of Africans but of the awareness that equality is a necessary ideal of the Republic.

Furthermore, the Negro, while the most prominent, was not the sole target even in the racist period. Prejudice was not limited by race, creed, national origin, or previous condition of servitude. The majority of the victims of lynchings in those years were Negroes; but there were 1,293 white victims of the rope and faggot as against 3,436 black. Italians in New Orleans, a Jew in Georgia, and Greeks in Omaha also met the fury of mob violence. The Ku Klux Klan of 1924 was more concerned with Catholics and Jews than with colored men.[6]

Above all, the response of Americans to the crisis of the past decade reveals the effectiveness of the appeal to the creed of equality. Even Bogalusa is not South Africa; and the inability of the open advocates of racism to attract support is the best evidence of the extent of commitment to that creed.

In estimating the meanings of integration, therefore, it is entirely appropriate to examine the analogous if not identical experience of other ethnic groups. Their process of acculturation will throw light on the need for defining the goals and the strategy of the civil rights movement.

Barring a major overturn of the American social system, which at the moment appears neither probable nor desirable, change will come within definable limits and will involve choices among alternatives. And decisions on this matter will be more effective if they come within an informed context that makes it possible to envision their results.

The inequities which survive from the past cannot be understood or remedied without a comprehension of the social order that

produced them. They are the pathological manifestations of a mechanism of adjustment which permitted that order to function. Their successful removal requires a consideration of the function they serve; otherwise, the alternatives are grim. Either the order will collapse to the injury of everyone, white as well as black, or else uncontrolled alternative modes of adjustment will recreate and perpetuate the diseased condition.

This was the error of most of the abolitionists, who thought they could extirpate slavery without considering the effects upon Southern society. The result by 1900 was the restoration of the Negro's subordination in other forms than slavery.[7]

Hence, the importance, in any effort to foresee future developments, of an understanding of segregation, of its relationship to equality, and of the probable effects of integration.

Popularly speaking, segregation was a response to the dissolution of earlier forms of stratification. In a slave regime, the physical separation of the dominant and subordinate populations was superfluous and inconvenient. In other relatively static societies, where places were rigidly defined and the symbols of status clearly fixed by law or custom, groups could mingle with considerable promiscuity because there were no problems of recognition and no dangers to the established hierarchy of persons and groups.[8]

In the South, segregation was a response to the abolition of slavery and to the threat to white superiority posed by Reconstruction. The pattern that emerged in the last quarter of the nineteenth century used the law to fix the identity of the Negroes and to confine them to inferior social places. To those ends it established a rigid etiquette of behavior and separate institutions that restricted the opportunities of the former slaves for education and employment. Within the limits thus established, residential separateness was unnecessary. The measures that implemented segregation were deliberate on the part of the whites; the purposes were clearly understood at the time. As for the Negroes, their wishes were of no consequence; once they were excluded from political power, violence induced their acquiescence. The result was a kind of order, the price of which was inequality of rights.[9]

In the freer, more fluid, and more mobile sections of the country, segregation was achieved by withdrawal rather than by restraint and was voluntary rather than compulsory. As the Northern cities expanded with the influx of waves of heterogeneous newcomers, the old residents moved away, and the new arrivals sorted themselves

out in neighborhoods that reflected their own sense of community. Education, employment, religious affiliation, and associational life fell within lines that were not imposed by law or by violence but were shaped by informal and largely spontaneous connections of kinship or community.

Although the Northern Negro suffered from prejudice as did the Southern, society was not polarized but fragmented; and he found himself but one of many groups comparably situated, some of which suffered from disabilities similar to his own. Negroes did not confront a homogeneous white community with a single chain of command leading up to a unified leadership. They found a place among numerous communities, each with its own power structure and its own leaders.[10]

The function of separateness in this context was not to establish or to perpetuate the inferiority of one group, but rather to accommodate diverse patterns of life that were the products of differences in ethnic and sectional heritage, or in economic and social background. By reducing contacts at the points of potential tension, this adjustment permitted each group to organize its own institutions without the oversight or interference of others, and yet was flexible enough to preserve some degree of order in a highly complex society. Furthermore, the expanding cities possessed enough free space and their organization was so loosely articulated that individuals who preferred not to affiliate could refrain from doing so and could get along in whatever degree of detachment they wished. The ghetto arrangement was therefore totally different in intention as well as in form from the segregation of the South.

Indeed the fact that the pluralistic order took account of actual differences within the population made it possible to preserve the *concept* of equality. Not every man was equally qualified in terms of inherited capital, cultural traits, personality, and intelligence to pursue equally the goals of success in American life. But the pursuit of happiness was not a single, unified scramble in which every individual sought the same prizes and in which only a few could be winners while the rest were doomed to frustration. In the stated beliefs of the society, every boy could grow up to be President—of the United States or at least a railroad. Americans could cling to faith in that useful proposition because they never subjected it to the test of practice. In reality the disparity of aspirations and career lines drew only a few persons into the competition for those lofty places while relatively independent subsystems, with their own

values and rewards, provided satisfying alternatives to many more. The children of Irish or Italian parents did not count themselves failures if their lives did not follow a course identical with that of the children of the Yankees. They had their own criteria of achievement and their own sources of gratification.

The result was to take the edge off the harshly competitive psychological and social conditions of an open society. Pluralism permitted the deployment of the population in an intricate network of relationships and associations that facilitated cooperation at some points, but that left large areas free for the withdrawal of individuals and groups and that therefore minimized conflict-provoking contacts. There were manifestations of prejudice, discrimination, and occasional violence among many of the ethnic and occupational groups. Measured against the potential explosiveness of the situation, however, those were relatively minor. Until the migrations of the past half-century, Negro life in Northen cities was not essentially different from that of other ethnic groups. It had some distinctive problems as every other group did; but relatively small numbers and generally favorable conditions permitted an accommodation on essentially the same terms.

Neither in the North nor in the South is integration in the sense of racial balance a meaningful guide to proximate future action. Desegregation is likely soon to eliminate the vestiges of discrimination inherited from the Jim Crow era; and it may open the way to full participation by Negroes in the political and economic life of the nation, but it will do so within the terms of some approximation of the group life already developed. Integration, defined as the elimination of differences, on the other hand, demands of both Negroes and whites an impossible surrender of identity. The deletion of all memory of antecedents, the severance of all ties to the past, and the liquidation of all particularistic associations is not only unfeasible but undesirable. It would curtail the capacity of this society to deal with its problems under the conditions of freedom; and significantly some of its advocates are either altogether nihilistic or else do not flinch from the totalitarian methods and consequences that would be involved in achieving this version of integration.[11]

Only a small minority of Negroes, however, think in these terms. The vast majority understand that they are a group and will remain so; they seek an expansion of their rights and opportunities, but

show neither a desire to merge with the whites nor any expectation that that will soon happen. Desegregation is a genuine issue; racial balance is a vague and confusing abstraction that turns their attention away from the genuine political, economic, and social problems they and other Americans confront.

The issue is perhaps clearest in the field of political action. No right is more basic than that to full and equal participation in the governmental process; and Negroes were quick to exercise the privileges of citizenship once they secured access to the ballot either through migration to the North or through the leveling of barriers in the South. Apathy was no more widespread among them than among other voters new to the suffrage. The colored people promptly assimilated the techniques of machine organization, and their power has increased steadily as their numbers have. With the appearance of a second generation, native to the city, they have begun to move into elective office at about the same pace as their predecessors did.

Three related factors continue to limit the effectiveness of their use of political power. The lack of competent leadership has enabled self-serving hacks and demagogues to push to the fore and has wasted on the quest for petty privilege the effort and energy that might have gone into improving the status of the whole group. The modes of collaboration with other blocs of voters have been slow to develop; and since the Negroes remain a minority, the ability to use their strength depends on alliances with others. Finally, Negroes have had difficulty in perceiving where their true interests lay when it came to such complex questions as education, urban renewal, and economic policy. In all three respects, they are repeating the experiences of earlier groups drawn into the processes of American democracy.

Nor is it to be expected that these people will be more enlightened in the use of power than their predecessors. Politics is not the cure-all that some naive observers consider it to be.[12] Post-Civil War Negroes in the South did not use their strength any more effectively than did the Irish of Boston in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The same sentimental temptation to idealize the underdog that once built up exaggerated expectations of the proletariat now sometimes leads to hopes for a panacea in the activities of the Negro citizen. There is no more reason to expect political wisdom from the black than from the white resident of a slum or from either than from the suburban commuter. The vote is not an

abstract exercise in either intelligence or benevolence but a means of exercising influence on the processes that shape governmental decisions. For some time yet, Negroes will use it to serve narrowly defined group interests.

The removal of surviving restraints on the right to vote is obviously important; but integration is an irrelevant distraction which disperses energy and inhibits the development of responsible leadership which can take a full and active role in politics at every level. Political effectiveness will grow not through the weakening of the sense of identity but through the development of institutions that can clarify the group's interests, provide organized means of ascent to leadership, and retain the loyalties of the growing middle-class and professional elements in the colored population.

Integration in the sense of the elimination of distinctiveness is no more relevant to the economic plight than to the political plight of the mass of Negroes. The demands for preferential hiring, for assigned quotas of desirable jobs, and for a Black Man's Marshall Plan are sometimes presented as if they were the means of attaining racial balance and therefore of furthering integration. Actually, they are calls for the recognition of the special character of the group; and to the extent that they are heeded, they strengthen identification with it.

Measurement of the rate of Negro progress is difficult because of the recency of this migration to the cities and because gross comparisons of whites and nonwhites distort the actual situation. A large proportion of urban Negroes have been where they are less than twenty years, almost all of them, less than fifty years. The analogous migration from Eastern and Southern Europe began in the 1890's and reached its peak between 1900 and 1910. The mass of Poles, Italians, and Russian Jews even in the prosperous 1920's, much less in the depression 1930's, had not made more rapid progress. Furthermore, the limitations of the census categories which recognize only whites and nonwhites obscure the genuine differences in occupation and income among the former and make comparisons invidious. Unfortunately, more refined data are difficult to come by.

It is undeniable, however, that a large percentage of American Negroes are confined to unskilled and poorly paid occupations at a time when technological changes reduce the demand for their labor. They therefore suffer more than do other sectors of the

population from unemployment, low incomes, and the consequent social deprivations. Furthermore, the same economic forces that contract the demand for their services and their position as late arrivals prevent them from developing the protected trades through which other groups maintained quasi-monopolistic control of some employment opportunities.

The difficulty is that no occupation in the United States—hod-carrier, teamster, machinist, shopkeeper, physician, or banker—ever represented a cross-section of the whole population. The social and cultural conditions that influenced recruitment to these callings did not prevail identically in all ethnic and sectional groups. Entirely apart from prejudice or discrimination, therefore, the chances that a given individual would follow one career line rather than another were likely to depend on an environment and on connections shaped by family influences.

Conceivably this pattern of recruitment could change. Since Jefferson's day, various utopians have dreamed of a mandarin system within which all infants start on equal terms and are directed by successive competitive tests of ability to their appropriate niches in life. This is the ultimate model of integration; and it would certainly put Negroes on terms of parity with all others. But, desirable or not, this solution is visionary. It is hardly necessary to attempt to estimate the social and psychological costs of such a system or even to speculate about the difficulty of defining ability (intelligence?) in that context. The dominant tendencies in American life have consistently broken down any effort to create the rigid controls upon which development in that direction depends. The likelihood is slim that those tendencies will change enough in the near future to offer any promise of relief to the Negroes' problems.

A general assault on the problems of poverty may, in time, mitigate the difficulties from which Negroes suffer along with the other unskilled and therefore superfluous elements in American society. But some Negroes at least are not content to wait for that happy outcome and are struggling now for better chances as a group. Pressure on employers to assign a quota of desirable places to colored people may result in a kind of tokenism, advantageous to a few without easing the hardships of the many. But such adjustments do help the few; and both the tactic and its outcome sustain and strengthen the sense of group solidarity. There are already contexts—in some levels of government employment, for instance—

in which there is an advantage to being black, a condition which puts a premium on affiliation with the group.

In the last analysis, the welfare of the Negroes depends upon the health of the whole economy and its capacity to produce and distribute goods according to an acceptable pattern. But the last analysis is remote indeed. In the interim, the Negroes will use what power they can muster as a group for their own advantage. Preferential treatment in some high-prestige forms of employment will be justified not because it will improve the lot of the great mass of the unskilled, but because it is a means of opening some avenues of escape for the most qualified. At relatively little cost in efficiency, this device can create a pool of potential leaders with a stake in social order and at the same time break the identification of the race with poverty.

Hence the importance of education upon which, increasingly, access to the more desirable places depends. The Negroes started with the initial disadvantage of dependence on the weakest schools in the country—those of the South. Migration compounded their difficulties, and the environment of poverty adds to their handicaps. The need for improvement is unarguable.

The methods of effecting that improvement are by no means clear, however. The pressure for integration has called attention to the problem; but it has also confused the solution. For some elements in the civil rights movement, integration in the form of racial balance has become an end in itself more important than the quality of the schools. Martin Luther King's hit-and-run involvement in this issue in Boston, Chicago, and Cleveland shows the danger of the thoughtless transference of the tactics of one kind of struggle to another.

Partly this outcome is the result of the historic development of the school issue in the South, where segregation was a means of perpetuating educational inequality and Negro inferiority. There desegregation was an essential step toward equality. However, the slogans of that effort were uncritically applied to the separateness of the Northern schools which had an altogether different function. The imbalance of the Northern schools was not designed to create or maintain Negro inferiority; and its result was not always to lower the quality of the education available to colored people.[18] Yet there was no forethought about the consequences of the attempt to end what came to be termed *de facto* segregation.

Furthermore, in this matter, there is a striking division of opinion

among Negroes, covered up by the appearance of unity on such occasions as the school strikes. The most vocal persons in the civil rights movement are the most mobile, those whose aspirations reach furthest, those most irked by the identification of their color. Integration expresses their not fully understood desire to sever their ties with the past; and racial balance is a means toward that end.

This desire does not reach very far among the mass of Negroes. In such cities as New York and Boston, where open-enrollment plans offered parents an opportunity to send their children outside the districts of their residence, only a very small minority chose to do so. However the lack of response may be explained away, it reveals the limited scope of the appeal of racial balance.

Yet this issue in many places has overshadowed the far more important factors that enter into the Negroes' educational deprivation. And it is likely that time and energy will continue to be dissipated on the question of racial balance that might more usefully be expended on the quality of the schools and on the orientation of the educational process to the needs of the colored students.

The demand for racial balance has sometimes had a blackmail effect; it has forced concessions on municipal authorities willing to spend more heavily on slum schools than they might otherwise have in order to stave off the drive for bussing. But this tactic has also had the adverse effect of exaggerating the deficiencies of schools in Negro neighborhoods and thus of frightening away experienced teachers, of hastening the flight to the suburbs and increasing the rate of withdrawal to private and parochial schools. The insistence upon integration is thus self-frustrating, as the experience of Washington, D. C., shows. Further pressure toward racial balance will certainly weaken the public schools and leave the Negroes the greatest sufferers.

The dilemma is unnecessary. There is no evidence that racial balance itself improves the capacity of the underprivileged to learn; nor that the *enforced* contact of dissimilar children has significant educational advantages. There is abundant evidence that deprived children have distinctive needs that require the special attention of the school. Yet the drive for integration has obscured, and sometimes actually impeded, the task of providing for those needs. Indeed the argument is now often being made that racial balance is desirable to meet the needs of white children.

Here, too, an awareness of the groups' identity and a determination to deal with its problems is the most promising path to equality.

The Negro deserves preferential treatment in education because his needs are great. But to receive it calls for the recognition of the special character of his situation, not for costly efforts artificially to commingle his children with others in the interest of the ideal of balance.[14]

Since the desegregated, but unintegrated, school is a neighborhood school, there is a relationship between the range of residential choices and the conditions of education. The Negroes suffer from poverty, from their recency of arrival, and—in housing, more than in any other sphere—from prejudice. It remains unfortunately true that some whites willing to work side by side with the Negro or even to vote for him in an election will boggle at accepting him as a neighbor. That hesitation is connected with the fact that the residential district, especially in the middle-class areas of the city, is also the setting of a distinctive communal life, with group-derived values and activities of its own. The presence of any outsider is a potential threat, exaggerated in the case of the Negro by fears of a mass inundation.

Something has been done—by law and persuasion—to quiet these fears; a good deal more can be done by these methods. But it would help if the fearful were aware that there is no widespread desire among Negroes for residential intermixture as such. Colored people are primarily concerned with the quality of housing; they do not value highly propinquity to whites. Talk about racial balance not only distorts the actuality of Negro intentions, but it heightens the very fears that may limit the freedom of the occasional black family that wishes to move to a mixed neighborhood. A recent study of middle-income Negro families, for instance, expressed surprise at the preference for ghetto residence and suggested that whites be moved in to encourage integration, as if that were a necessary and desirable end in itself. A state legislative committee on low-income housing uncritically adopted the same goal. These proposals repeat the errors of New York City's experiment with benign quotas which deprived Negroes of the quarters they needed in order to save room for whites, all out of the concern with balance.[15]

Integration is a false issue. The problem is housing—how can adequate space up to present-day standards of decency be made available to the poor? How can all other colored families get fair value up to the level of their incomes, without being penalized for their race? For most Negroes these are the primary issues. They are

difficult enough without the complications of racial balance. The control of the urban renewal process, the role of government as entrepreneur, and problems of design and form will set the framework within which the character of the Negroes' future housing will be determined. And group cohesiveness will be of great importance in influencing decisions in these matters.

The development and strengthening of Negro communal institutions may also help normalize the situation of the colored family. The disorderly features of that position are well known—the absence of a male head, frequent illegitimacy and dependence—as well as their relationship to juvenile delinquency, crime, and narcotic addiction. But these characteristics have been too readily associated with the effects of the slave heritage. The servitude of the plantation may have left elements of weakness in the families of the freedmen; but the extent to which sound family life developed among the Negroes between 1865 and 1915 is impressive, as is the extent to which it still prevails in the rural South closest to the slave setting.

A more plausible source of disorder is the effect of rural-urban migration with low income and slum housing at its destination. That correlation conforms to what is known about the changes in family life in other societies in which slavery has not been a factor.[16] It conforms also to the experience of earlier groups of migrants to American cities. Less than a half-century ago, the foreign-born residents of Irish, Jewish, or Polish slums faced comparable problems of matriarchal households and delinquency.

It was not alone the tradition of solidarity and discipline that contained the damage among these peoples, but also the fact that their families were encased in social and cultural institutions which imposed restraints upon recalcitrant individuals, established norms of behavior, and disposed of weighty sanctions for conformity. Negroes have been slower to develop similar institutions, partly because this migration came at a moment when government absorbed some of these functions, but also because in their experience separation meant segregation and bore the imputation of inferiority. Yet those men who, in the name of integration, deny that there is a significant role for the Negro press, or for Negro churches, or for Negro associations are also denying the group of its media for understanding, for expression, and for action. They would thereby weaken the capacity of the people who need those media to act on their own behalf.[17]

It is the ultimate illogic of integration to deny the separateness of the Negro and therefore to inhibit him from creating the communal institutions which can help cope with his problems. Delinquency, poverty, slums, and inadequate housing of course concern all Americans; and the attempt to eradicate them calls for common efforts from every part of the nation. But history has given the Negroes a special involvement in these matters; and to deny the actualities of the group's existence is to diminish its ability to deal with them. To confuse segregation, the function of which is to establish Negro inferiority, with the awareness of separate identity, the function of which is to generate the power for voluntary action, hopelessly confuses the struggle for equality.

Clarification of the goals of the civil rights movement has immediate tactical implications. Desegregation is not the same as integration; Selma is not Harlem, Bogalusa, not Chicago.

Where violence, exclusion from the ballot, or state power has deprived the Negro of his equal rights as a man and a citizen, it is his obligation and that of all other Americans to demand an immediate end to the discriminatory measures that aim at his subordination.

Desegregation will not solve any of the other important economic, social, and political problems of American life; it will only offer a starting point from which to confront them. The inadequacies of the political system, unemployment, inferior education, poor housing, and delinquency will still call for attention. In some of these matters the peculiarities of the Negroes' situation call for special treatment. But with reference to none of them is integration a meaningful mode of action; and the call for it which echoes from a different struggle on a different battleground only produces confusion.

Whatever may happen in the more distant future, Negroes will not merge into the rest of the population in the next few decades. Those who desire to eliminate every difference so that all Americans will more nearly resemble each other, those who imagine that there is a main stream into which every element in the society will be swept, are deceived about the character of the country in which they live. As long as common memories, experience, and interests make the Negroes a group, they will find it advantageous to organize and act as such. And the society will better be able to accommodate them as equals on those terms than it could under the pretense that integration could wipe out the past.

REFERENCES

1. I have treated the background of this problem in greater detail in *The American People in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954); *Race and Nationality in American Life* (Boston, 1957); and *Fire-Bell in the Night* (Boston, 1964).

2. The civil rights movement is neither unified nor represented by a single spokesman. The attitudes here discussed reflect a trend expressed in statements of individuals. There are helpful collections of these views in Harold R. Isaacs, *The New World of Negro Americans* (New York, 1963); and Robert Penn Warren, *Who Speaks for the Negro?* (New York, 1965). For the background, see Richard Bardolph, *The Negro Vanguard* (New York, 1959); August Meier, *Negro Thought in America 1880-1915* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1963). On the extremists, see Irving Howe, "New Styles in 'Leftism,'" *Dissent*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Summer 1965), pp. 312, 314, 318 ff.

3. See, for example, *New York Times'* survey of whites' attitudes, September 21, 1964; Dean Harper, "Aftermath of a Long, Hot Summer," *Transaction*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (July-August 1965), pp. 9, 10.

4. Reconstruction literature generally focuses on the failures and the missed opportunities rather than on the achievements. See E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro in the United States* (New York, 1957), pp. 135, 142; W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in American* (New York, 1935).

5. Oscar Handlin, *The Newcomers. Negroes and Puerto Ricans in a Changing Metropolis* (New York, 1959).

6. Walter White, *Rope & Faggot* (New York, 1929), pp. 20, 227, 230 ff.; James E. Cutler, *Lynch-Law* (New York, 1905), pp. 170 ff.; J. E. Coxe, "New Orleans Mafia Incident," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (October 1937), pp. 1067 ff.; Theodore Saloutos, *Greeks in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), pp. 62-69.

7. See Dwight L. Dumond, *Anti-Slavery* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1961); Martin Duberman, *The Antislavery Vanguard* (Princeton, N. J., 1965), pp. 137 ff.; James M. McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality* (Princeton, N. J., 1964; Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1964).

8. See Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen* (New York, 1946); Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery* (Chicago, 1959).

9. C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York, 1957) describes the process.

10. See T. J. Woofter, *Negro Problem in Cities* (New York, 1928), pp. 177 ff.; Howard Brotz, *The Black Jews of Harlem* (New York, 1964); John Daniels, *In Freedom's Birthplace* (Boston, 1914), pp. 133 ff.; W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro* (Philadelphia, 1899), pp. 197 ff., 389 ff.; St. Clair Drake, *Churches and Voluntary Associations in the Chicago*

Negro Community (Chicago, 1940); St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis* (New York, 1962), Vol. I, pp. 174 ff.

11. See, for example, Howard Zinn, *SNCC, The New Abolitionists* (Boston, 1964), pp. 216-241.

12. For example, Charles E. Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White* (New York, 1964).

13. A misleading impression is often the result of gross comparisons of selected Negro schools or school districts with a general white average. It is necessary to take account also of variables other than race that affect performance. An analysis of achievement in Boston district high schools, for instance, shows that schools in certain white neighborhoods are as deficient as those in Negro neighborhoods (reported in *Boston Globe,* December 14, 1964, pp. 1, 13).

14. There is abundant evidence that significant improvement can come in the performance of Negroes in desegregated but racially unbalanced schools. The Banneker experiment in St. Louis, the experience of Washington, D. C., and the results in Louisville, Kentucky, point to the same conclusion. Of course, improvement can also come in balanced schools. However, the essential element is not balance, but the allocation of adequate educational resources to compensate for the disadvantaged situation of the Negro. See also Frank G. Dickey, "A Frontal Attack on Cultural Deprivation," *Phi Delta Kappan,* Vol. 45, No. 8 (May 1964), p. 398; *New York Times,* May 17, 1965. A good deal of the literature is summarized in T. F. Pettigrew, *A Profile of the Negro American* (Princeton, N. J., 1964), although the conclusions drawn are different.

15. Lewis G. Watts, et al., *The Middle-Income Negro Family Faces Urban Renewal* (Boston, 1964); Massachusetts Special Commission on Low-Income Housing, *Summary Report* (Boston, 1965), and *Final Report* (Boston, 1965), House Document 4040, p. 10.

16. See, for example, B. A. Pauw, *The Second Generation: A Study of the Family among the Urbanized Bantu in East London* (Cape Town, Union of South Africa, 1963); Raymond T. Smith, *The Negro Family in British Guiana* (London, 1956).

17. See, for example, Louis E. Lomax, *The Negro Revolt* (New York, 1962), pp. 204, 205.